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THE COAL CONFERENCE

The coal operators and the coal miners are in a distressing position. They are in deadlock over the terms upon which anthracite coal mining may be resumed. Neither side is willing to yield. They have wound themselves up tightly. It is probable that each side wishes it had not been so positive. It is even possible that each side would like to be led out of the wilderness of non-action. Perhaps each side is delighted with the invitation of the President to confer with him on the subject of the strike. We can imagine the leaders of each of the combatants whispering in the President's ear: "We can afford to do whatever you say, but cannot afford to retreat a single inch exeept upon your request." It is entirely within the range of probabilities that the President will tactfully aid each side to stop quarreling and resume the production of coal. This would make each side happy and make the President the hero of the hour and the recipient of the people's gratitude.

In vain would the coal be taken out of the mines, however, if the railroad companies should balk in its transportation. In such a case the interstate commerce powers of Congress could speedily be invoked and heavy penalties imposed upon the railroad companies which should refuse to carry coal to consumers. Or the State of Pennsylvania could be exhorted by the President to discipline both the coal companies and the railway companies having charters from the State, if they should refuse to produce and carry coal wherever it is demanded. The State courts of Pennsylvania can declare the franchise of these corporations forfeited if they are not used or if they are misused. Such proceedings could be supplemented by the appointment of receivers, and the mines and railroads could be placed in the hands of such receivers for carrying on their work.

The eighty millions of men, women, and children in the United States cannot be made to go cold and hungry for the want of coal to heat and cook with, if the executive of the State of Pennsylvania will apply to its courts, and if a judge can be found possessing the integrity and grit once shown by Justice Grier of that State. A jury of his court returned a verdict for many thousands of dollars in favor of a plaintiff whose case the court believed to be a dishonest one. The judge waited for the clerk to enter the verdict, and immediately thundered out this order: "Mr. Clerk, enter an order setting aside that verdict. It takes thirteen d——d rascals to rob a man in this court."

THE BIG GUN OF ASTRONOMY

By H. H. CLAUDY, in "The American Inventor."

Of the practical science (by which term is meant those which deal with actual masses of matter in contradistinction to the purely theoretical sciences which deal with abstract facts) there is probably no one department of learning which has aided so much in the development of human knowledge as has the science of optics. To the means and methods of shaping pieces of glass of various sizes humanity owes the invention, development and present state of perfection of the telescope, the microscope and the spectroscope, the three most indispensable physical appliances in the laboratories of science.

It would be a fruitless discussion and difficult, if not impossible, to consider which of these instruments is the most important, but the telescope, considered either commercially or scientifically, is certainly the most picturesque. It is to the telescope in a modified form that the surveyor turns when he wishes to measure angles or distances, and it is telescope which the mariner uses in connection with some graduated circles to determine his position upon the trackless sea.

It is the telescope or some modification of it which is necessary in warfare to distinguish the movements of the enemy at a distance, and it is the telescope upon the camera which greatly aids in the study of natural history by securing photographs of wild birds, animals, and insects which cannot be otherwise easily observed. And it is the telescope which is at once the thirteen-inch gun and the pocket pistol of astronomy, the foundation of the modern science and the topmost pinacle of the monument which it has raised for itself among those pillars of knowledge which will endure for generations among the sons of men, long after the memory of the first builders shall have passed away.

VICE IN MODERN PLAYS

By WILLIAM WINTER, in "New York Tribune."

The "Movement" continues—the Movement, as defined by Henry Arthur Jones, "to treat the Great Realities of modern life upon the stage." Five years ago, according to Mr. Jones' record, it was "scotched," or "gagged" or otherwise obstructed, needing some of those remedial aids that are pertinently suggested by Macbeth; but it was not absolutely stopped. Various resolute persons, as noted by Mr. Jones, were "sweating" in its service, and he declared that they would continue to "sweat," in the sanguine, not to say humid, belief that, sooner or later, through a liberal expenditure of perspiration, it would again get started. That belief has been justified—mainly through the fervid industry of Mr. Pinero, who appears to be the chief sweater of the whole devoted band; and, with Mr. Pinero's drama of "Iris,"—which, last night, was revealed, in all its naked nastiness, at the Criterion Theater—the Movement makes a spurt, which ought to carry it well forward, if not actually to the goal.

The "Great Realities of our modern life," it appears are courtesans and blackguards, sexual passions and sexual crimes, infidelities, both in the state of marriage and out of it, and a general stew of bestiality and corruption. These "great realities" extend through all classes of society, dominate all worldly affairs, and overshadow and control everything. There is no honesty in human nature; there is no honesty in human life; there is no virture in woman; there is no honor in man. All places that the eye of heaven visits has iniquity. Hereditary disease has infected everybody, and the human race is merely a pestilent congregation of moral lepers.

These being the facts, it is the province of the "Movement," by means of the acted drama, to edify this race of vipers with an everlasting panoramic photograph of its own depravity and filth—"to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature;" with the understanding that "nature" is a cesspool, and that there is nothing in this world so "virile," so "true," so ecstatically delightful, and so fraught with exemplary precept, to its inhabitants, as a literal reproduction of that typical emblem. Thus loom the Great Realities and thus shows the Movement, refracted through the mist of many of the dramas of the last ten years.

THE MERCHANT OF PLENISH.

President Baer, loquitur:
The quality of mercy is not drained;
It's sifted through a coal screen in my mines
Until the dust flies up; it is twice pressed:
It presseth him that mines and him that buys—
Especially at twenty scads per ton.
'Tis flightiest in the flightiest; it becomes
The mining magnate better than his wad.
The wad doth show the force of temporal power;
To bat the brute who hath no wad at all—
For coin enables us to turn the screw,
But mercy is above this slipshod way;
It is enthroned in the hearts of things
Who pass among the two-legged tribes for men.
And when the janitor doth raise the rent,
We, like enough, reduce the miner's wage
And make him like the act. Say, when you freeze
Because you can't pay twenty plunks a ton
For these black diamonds we daily drag
From out the darksome bowels of the earth,
Reflect, I say, within your chill domain,
Upon the utter beauty of the brand
Of mercy that we show. Then kick, if so you will.

THE NORTH POLE—WHAT WILL BE FOUND THERE, AND WHY I WANT TO DISCOVER IT

"That the Pole will surely be reached within the present generation is my firm conviction. This achievement will be accomplished during the six-months day, and not in the six-months night."

By Commander R. E. PEARY, U. S. N.

"There are sometimes lanes in the ice along which the explorer may travel in safety and expeditiously. If they are absent, he might just as well give up the game."

To reach the Pole is the ambition of every Arctic explorer, for he who reaches it will attain a name and fame unique in the history of exploration.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent and hundreds of lives sacrificed to attain this end, but thus far all efforts have failed.

Of what benefit to mankind will be the reaching of the Pole? I will tell you. The explorer who is first able to plant his foot on the spot which marks the extreme northern point of this great round world of ours will achieve an honor that will endure so long as mankind inhabits this earth. But simply to reach that point and come back will not result in any great benefit to science. On the other hand, if the explorer can remain long enough to take observations, to record temperature, to study the sea currents and the depth of the channels, to investigate the fauna and flora and the physical charcteristics of the polar world and contiguous territory, then certain positive results are sure to accrue to commeree and to science.

I have tried to reach the Pole several times, and have failed, not because of lack of effort, but of resources and on account of unfavorable conditions. The man who will finally reach the Pole will owe his success not to equipment, but to chance. Unless the conditions are extremely favorable no man, however well fitted he may be to achieve the result, or however complete his outfit may be, can hope to reach the goal for the attainment of which so many men have given up their fortunes and their lives.

You might just as well attempt to cross the North River in an ordinary ferryboat when the stream is solidly packed with cakes of ice four feet thick as to cross the ice floes of the Arctic circle with a dog sled. Only birds with strong wings can pierce the mysterious region surrounding the North Pole under such conditions.

That the Pole will surely be reached within the present generation is my firm conviction. This achievement will be accomplished during the six-months day, and not in the six-months night. Some writers have contended that the Pole can never be reached in the day because of the shortness of its duration. Now, my experience goes to show the reverse of this proposition. No Arctic explorer has done so much work by moonlight as myself. The first winter I spent in the far north I traveled 200 miles to Conger in the night.

When the moon rides the heavens the Arctic night is brilliant with light. Excellent progress can be made by the explorer over routes with which he is familiar; but in new territorye he is utterly at sea, for the reason that he is unable to select the proper route over the ice. Slow progress can of course be made during the long winter night, if one must do it; but I prefer to do my advance work in the daylight, when I can look far and wide over the vast stretches of territory.

While the cold is intense in the extreme North, it is not so severe as it is in Russian Siberia. Therefore, it is not the low temperature that keeps us from the Pole. It is rather the impenetrable fields of ice, so rough and so jagged as to bar progress even under the most favorable auspices. There are sometimes lanes in the ice along which the explorer may travel in safety and expeditiously. If they are absent he might just as well give up the game.

The man who reaches the Pole will be successful not because of his superior equipment, but because the Arctic conditions are favorable. When he reaches it I do not believe he will find an open polar sea, but simply pack ice, such as is found throughout the northern regions.

IN COUNTRY LANES

O country lanes, white starred with bloom!
Where wild things nestle, shy and sweet,
Where all your waving grasses laugh
And part before my eager feet—

Could I forever dwell with you,
Letting the mad old world rush by,
And just be glad of wind and sun,
Of rocking nest and brooding sky!

How often, in the crowded streets,
I dream of you, sweet country lane,
And feel once more your soft breeze soothe
My sordid breast and weary brain.

Ever above the city's din,
Above the clink of yellow gold,
I hear a wild bird's ringing call,
I catch the scent of leafstrewn mould.

Your grasses kiss my fevered cheek,
Your hawthorn drops her scented rain.
I am a child again, and dream
That heaven bides here, O flower starred lane!

—The Criterion.

SINCERITY IN ART

By F. V. C.

In current notices of the late Emile Zola and his literary work it is almost generally said that he was, in all his writings, sincere, even at the expense of art and propriety. This statement gives rise to the query, "What is sincerity in art?" Zola was a realist, but was no less an artist on that account. He was, like all his countrymen who have made a name in literature, an artist, first, last, and all the time. He strove for effect and produced it by artistic methods.

Now, just how true the artist can strike the note of sincerity—personal sincerity—is a speculation. It would seem that the novelist, in common with the painter and the sculptor, must sink his individuality in his creations, rather than reveal it. The lyric poet and musician have more chance for egotistical expression, yet even they are necessarily hampered by restrictions. Even when seeming to reveal their inmost thoughts or emotions, it may be douted if they are disclosing their own personality so much as an imaginary one. Lord Byron, certainly one of the most egotistical of poets, represented himself to the contemporary reading public as a romantic and gloomy personage something after the manner of a heroic outlaw, so that Lady Blessington, when she met him for the first time, was somewhat amazed to find in him a witty and apparently somewhat blase man of the world, who laughed heartily at the impression he had created.

The novelist, dealing in pictures of men and manners necessarily somewhat conventionalized even in the most "realistic" efforts, has less opportunity for striking the personal note than the poet. If he chooses to depict gross subjects in a manner more or less studiously in accord therewith, and to transgress what is regarded at the present day as propriety in literature, he does not, ipso facto, stamp himself a conscientious man, even though the matters thus treated represent a condition of society which, however lamentable, would seem to be as certainly unavoidable, so long as sin, misfortune and want, that dreadful cerebus, continues to exist. Nor does he earn the title by sneering at subjects that are regarded by a considerable portion of his countrymen, and, perhaps not the least worthy, as sacred.

That Zola was, personally, a brave and honest man, seems without question. But that he has succeeded in showing this in his fictions, if, indeed, he ever made the attempt, may assuredly be doubted.

FROM THE FARM.

The summer boarder's packed his grip
Down on Bill Medder's place,
An' Tilly Ann is wipin' off
The tear drops on her face;
An' down the road a half a mile
One of the hired men
Is breathin' words o' thankfulness,
Fer Tilly's his again.

—Indianapolis Sun.

WOMAN'S SACRIFICE FOR WOMAN

Following the example of Mr. Wyckoff, the wealthy Princeton graduate whose experiments as a working man are well known to the public, Miss Bessie Van Vorst, a relative of the late Chancellor Van Vorst, of New York, disguised as a working woman, under the name of Esther Kelly, obtained a position in a Pittsburg pickle factory, her object being to see how "the other half" lives.

On reaching the great labor mart with its Babel-like confusion of tongues, as an entire stranger, Miss Van Vorst went to the rooms of the Young Woman's Christian Association, where she was directed to a boarding place, which she found at the same time a harbor for the friendless and a refuge for homeless children. Here she engaged a dismal room away up in the roof, and board at $3 a week. She then started for a pickle factory. The timekeeper was kind and courteous, and gave her employment at $4.20 a week.

Next day in the gray morning dawn she left the squalid boarding house with its poor fare, its frowsy matron, its noisy and worse than orphaned children, and, with an unsavory luncheon done up in a newspaper, wended her way through sooty, crowded streets to the pickle factory, where she found herself one of 500 women and girls presided over by five other women—all enrolled for a working day of ten hours.

Miss Van Vorst complains of a discrimination in favor of the men. They were paid from $1.35 to $3 a day, while the women, even when promoted to piecework, were not allowed to earn more than $1.20 per day. The men were also provided with a good hot dinner, while the women employes must be content with the cold luncheon brought from home. She found the hygienic arrangements of the pickle factory excellent, and the employes well treated in most respects. One great favor shown them was a two weeks' Christmas vacation with no deduction in wages. On Saturday, when the girls had to scrub the floors and tidy up the rooms, they went home an hour earlier.

Miss Van Vorst held her place three weeks, with an occasional day off for rest. She found her sister employes uniformly cheerful, patient, obliging, and full of sympathy and kindness. In even the most vulgar and frivolous she saw only lack of educational advantages, and felt that in natural ability these daughters of toil fully equaled her own more favored class. Every Saturday the owner of the factory came and gave a pleasant and helpful talk to the employes. The talks of one or two missionaries who accompanied him were too abstract. Miss Van Vorst advises those young society women who are sacrificing some precious hours every week for the benefit of the working girls to try to amuse them by a farce, a humorous recitation, or story, rather than to seek to uplift them intellectually and esthetically by a talk on Shakespeare or Italian art.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

WHICH HAS DONE THE MORE FOR THE WORLD—LOVE OR FEAR?

By Rev. LORING W. BATTEN, Rector of St. Mark's Church (Episcopal) New York.

Love and fear are the two principal influences that enter into the formation of character.

The question as to which of these has done the more for the world is a debatable one; and while arguments may be advanced to support either side, yet from my own viewpoint, those in behalf of love are the more numerous and the most potent.

You cannot reach the soul of a child through discipline. You may establish a list of dont's or rules as long as the moral law, and fix a punishment for the violation of each; but when the boy outgrows parental authority and is free to follow his own desires, there is a possibility, and often a probability, that he will purposely do the very things that were prohibited out of a desire to assert his independence.

The Christian religion is founded on the law of love; but fear has in times past played an important part in its establishment. Take the doctrine of hell as an illustration. The clergy, through their vigorous and ofttimes highly dramatic presentation of the subject, frightened the people into joining the Church. They taught that one must be good, not to please God, but to escape the tortures of hell.

There is little in the teachings of Christ to warrant this old-time attitude of the clergy; and it has long since been abandoned. The Saviour taught that love of God and love to one's neighbors were the chief principles of right living. He painted no fearful pictures of hell to frighten them into the kingdom of God, but won them by the exercise of divine love.

There is a yellowness in the pulpit as well as in the press; but it is less excusable. Newspapers are published for the purpose of making money, but the gospel is preached to save men. Sensationalism may draw crowds, but it won't save souls. It is love that saves.

Who can estimate the good that mother love has done for the world? No matter how low a man may fall, or how thoughtless he may become, you will never hear him speak disrespectfully of his mother. The mother love is persistent in the face of all dangers and discouragements. It triumphs over all obstacles, and never fails in the darkest hour.

It is love for humanity that builds hospitals, establishes schools, extends aid to the poor and the unfortunate, opens missions, sends relief trains to cities swept by fire or wrecked by earthquake, builds art museums and libraries, and makes the lot of man endurable. Without its pervasive and uplifting influence the world would be a charnel house; with it, it is a grand and glorious home for manly, heroic endeavor.

REMINDERS.

There is nothing by nature so unpleasant as may not by industry be made full of grace and sweetness.

Duty looks at life as a debt to be paid; love sees life as a debt to be collected. Duty is constantly paying assessments; love is constantly counting its premiums.

In company guard your tongue; in solitude your heart. Our words need watching, but so also do our thoughts and imaginations, which grow most active when we are alone.

Appointments, once made, become debts. If you have made an appointment with anyone you owe him punctuality. You have no right to throw away his time, if you do your own.

Do not think that you can do anything worth doing in a fit of enthusiasm, but train yourself carefully to any work that you are called on to do, and think nothing too small to do carefully, or for which to train carefully, that is for the good of your fellow-creatures.

THERE ARE OTHERS.

"Has he a well-developed sense of humor?"

"When the joke is on some one else he has."—Chicago Post.

THE QUESTION OF WAGES

While the larger issues of the coal strike are not likely to be permanently settled for some time to come, there are some minor issues and arguments connected with it that can be discussed and decided by the thoughtful without any delay whatever. In order to look at this matter fairly, it is necessary to divest one's self of prejudice; and some of the arguments advanced by both sides are more or less colored by private interest or personal and illogical conviction.

For example, somebody brought forward as an argument against the miners, not long ago, the fact that "some of them own and live in neat cottages, with lace curtains and trimmed parking," and seemed to think that this, of itself, proved that the unions were in the wrong. Behind this conclusion was more or less evident the idea that workingmen ought to be satisfied without luxuries; that something was wrong when the laborer could save enough out of his daily savings to pay for a cottage, however modest, and that this proved his claim of not getting living wages to be wholly invalid.

This sort of reasoning is a fair example of the way in which many people argue on large economic questions; and a little thought will show it to be both mischevious and illogical. A workingman of average intelligence ought to be able to earn enough money, not only to support himself and family, but to lay something by if the family is not a large one. If the average wage will not permit a certain percentage of workingmen to do this, those who have children, and perhaps support aged parents, or are unfortunate in having much sickness in their families, will not be able to live comfortably, and in time may become paupers, or sink below the level of decent citizenship in one way or another.

A certain percentage of workingmen in any community are thrifty, honest, industrious, healthy fellows, beginning life without heavy burdens in the way of dependent relatives; and such men will naturally save money. It is a long way better for the public that they should. A certain other percentage will be always behindhand, because of thriftlessness, bad management, sickness, or other fault or misfortune. The majority will just about manage to live on their wages without running in debt or saving much, and will educate their children to be at least as efficient in doing the work of the world as they themselves are.

If, now, wages are so lowered that no workingman is able to save anything, the pauper and debtor class is increased, the thrifty laborer has nothing with which to help his poorer neighbors, and the general tone of the community is lowered. Women are forced into the industrial field, which has always a bad effect on home life when it happens on a large scale; children are obliged to go to work early; the health of the people suffers, and the ultimate result is more costly than a fair rate of wages would have been. There are, of course, times when it is impossible, for reasons of competition, to pay fair wages; but, barring such reasons, the majority of workingmen ought to live comfortably on their incomes, and a considerable number ought to own their homes.

HEREDITY.

"I saw Klumsey's baby yesterday. It's a regular chip off the old block."

"Why, I couldn't see any resemblance at all."

"No? Well, when I saw the kid it had just opened its mouth and put its foot in it."—Philadelphia Press.

NEXT!

"What is the trouble between your wife and mine?" asked the first mosquito. "Oh," wearily answered the second. "You ought to know these women. They had a disagreement over which one had the most and the latest style of germs."—Baltimore American.

THE POINT OF RESEMBLANCE.

Clara—Mr. Clumsily paid me a queer compliment last evening.

Maude—What was it?

Clara—He said I reminded him of sugar.

Maude—Well, dear, you certainly have your share of sand.—Chicago News.

A MASTER STROKE.

"Oh, he's absolutely supreme in New York politics."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; he gave an excursion down the bay to the mothers-in-law of voters, and the boat never came back."—Puck.

A RUSTIC CONCLUSION.

"Well, well," remarked Farmer Korntop at the zoo, "this here lion 'pears to be real good-natured."

"Mebbe," suggested his good wife, "it's one o' them social lions ye read about in the papers."—Philadelphia Press.

SUBTLE.

In a Prohibition hamlet,
Where he had to stop awhile,
He winked a very funny wink,
And thus provoked a smile.

—Puck.

THE ORIENTAL AND HIS RUGS.

A recent writer on Oriental rugs says that there is no arbitrary test by which an inexperienced person can tell a genuine rug from a bogus one. Knots and strands mean nothing except in connection with other important elements. Shades and spots are imitated. Washing with brush and water color frequently leads only to the discovery of a bad spot in an otherwise fine rug. The Oriental dyer does his work according to his own sweet will. Between the puffs of a cigarette and the gossip of his friends, he dips his material in the dye tub. Only the expert knowledge of the old rug buyer can be depended on. These buyers go to the great fairs on the edge of the desert, where once a year the men of the East gather to haggle together. The fairs are in progress for weeks, yet little money changes hands, for, curiously enough, the Orientals are just as anxious for machine made products of America and Europe as the cultured of those lands are for the matchless products of his loom. Sometimes Western buyers push into Persia and the Caucasus to search out rare weaves in the homes of the weavers, but the venture is always attended with some danger from native hostiity. It is said that the annals of commerce contain greater romances than were ever woven around tales of war.—New York Tribune.

NOT TO BE BEHINDHAND.

"Oh! yes," babbled the sweet young thing, "I just dote on literature."

"I suppose you are interested in the Poe revival?"

"Who?"

"Baltimore genius—Edgar Allan Poe?"

"I have read nearly all his books; that is, except the ones he has written this last year. It is hard to keep up with those historical novels, you know!"—Baltimore Herald.